

7 February 1980

DDCI Briefing

Soviet Military Forces Opposite Iran

- I. <sup>Sum</sup> Soviet military forces in the Transcaucasus Military District opposite northwestern Iran appear to be upgrading their level of combat preparedness in case a decision is made to intervene in Iran. A force of two or three divisions, sufficient to occupy and hold the Azerbaijan region, could be ready in about two weeks or less.
- A much larger force sufficient to occupy and hold the oil fields in the south would have to be drawn from other areas of the USSR as well as the Transcaucasus and would require considerably more time to prepare.
- A. Some low-strength divisions in the Transcaucasus MD have received new modern equipment since late December, and several have engaged in higher-than-normal levels of field training.
1. The size of the units involved and the "people intensive" nature of the activities noted suggest that some reservists have been called up for training.
  2. Similar activity occurred in the low-strength divisions opposite Afghanistan late last summer.

B. We have no evidence at present of a substantial callup of reservists, the buildup of logistics stocks near the border, or the augmentation and positioning of motor transport units.

I. Activity of this nature, as well as the establishment of the necessary command and control structure, occurred about two weeks prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December.

II. Nearly all major military units in the Turkestan Military District opposite northeastern Iran have been committed to Afghanistan.

A. It is conceivable that the Soviet forces could concurrently invade Iran from western Afghanistan, where the terrain is easier. Such a move would, however, leave their very long supply line open to attacks by both the Iranians and the Afghan insurgents, and would require additional logistical preparations in the region.

B. Although the activity noted in the Transcaucasus MD could be for the commitment of forces to Afghanistan, the proximity to the Iranian border of most of the forces noted active and the apparent Soviet concern over the situation in Iran make this less likely.

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1. One tactical air fighter bomber regiment which was moved from Transcaucasus to the Turkestan MD in December has now returned to its homebase opposite northwestern Iran.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

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